

FIGHTING BACK

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TO REDUCE DEMAND FOR ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Charlotte NC ❖ Columbia SC ❖ Gallup NM ❖ Kansas City MO ❖ Little Rock AR ❖ Milwaukee WI ❖ Newark NJ
New Haven CT ❖ Oakland CA ❖ San Antonio TX ❖ Santa Barbara CA ❖ Vallejo CA ❖ Washington, DC ❖ Worcester MA

Kansas City trains ER staff to identify signs of substance abuse



Kansas City — Alcohol and other drugs are underlying problems for as many as 1000 patients seen each month in the emergency room at Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri. Yet until recently, many emergency room personnel did not know how to recognize the signs of substance abuse. Jim Bridgeford, coordinator of continuum of care for Project Neighborhood, reports that fewer than one-third of the ER patients with substance abuse problems were being identified and referred for substance abuse treatment, or other services to support sobriety.

In April, Project Neighborhood organized training for the ER staff to help them recognize the symptoms of substance abuse and determine appropriate treatment needs for the

patients. A total of 85 doctors, nurses, and medical students attended the training and found the information extremely valuable.

Project Neighborhood and Truman Hospital are now exploring expanding the training model beyond the ER staff, to include other hospital services and clinics, e.g., obstetrics and orthopedics.

The training was organized by Project Neighborhood and Truman Hospital, and conducted by Edward Bernstein, MD, the director of Project Assert, a nationally recognized substance abuse identification and referral program at Boston Medical Center Hospital.

Did You Know...

The Greater Columbia Fighting Back Project has merged with the regional substance abuse prevention agency, Midlands Prevention Alliance. Elaine Dowdy is the regional community development coordinator overseeing substance abuse initiatives in a four-county area. She is also the project coordinator on a one-year planning grant from the Knight Foundation to develop youth violence prevention initiatives.

San Antonio Fighting Back helps expand treatment options for residents



San Antonio — Accessible substance abuse treatment has been a real problem for the 200,000 residents in the Fighting Back target area of San Antonio. The absence of treatment facilities in this neighborhood meant that those who wanted treatment had to travel beyond the 25 square miles of the Fighting Back target area to obtain the services they needed.

Now thanks to the collaborative efforts of all the parties of San Antonio Fighting Back, there are four new programs which treat substance abuse and mental illnesses, as well as the neighborhood's first-ever detoxification center — all within walking distance.

Getting residents to support the presence of these new treatment programs was not easy. Many people did not want treatment facilities in their neighborhood. The effort required extensive community education and mobilization to inform the community

about the importance and benefits of having treatment easily available for individuals and for family participation. Residents had to understand that the centers were crucial to reducing local substance abuse problems and improving the health and safety of the area.

The Alamo Area Association for the Prevention and Treatment of Addiction (AAAPTA), a local network formed by Fighting Back, has provided guidance for achieving the objective of making substance abuse treatment available to all who need it. AAAPTA also assists in collecting and analyzing data and statistics on the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment for the San Antonio Fighting Back project.

Future goals include expanding access to treatment for adolescents. San Antonio presently has no detoxification for indigent adolescents.

Vallejo Collaborative Develops Key Recommendations for School Substance Abuse Policies



Did You Know...

In Newark's recent municipal elections, Newark Fighting Back Partnership prepared a position paper that identified Newark's most important substance abuse problems. The paper was distributed to all the candidates for mayor and city council and has assured substance abuse as a priority for all office holders.

Vallejo — How can you keep kids from using drugs and alcohol? The Fighting Back Partnership in Vallejo convened a blue ribbon committee to answer that question. The committee presented a series of recommendations on how the schools and community could work together to reduce the prevalence of substance abuse among the city's youth.

The Community Against Substance Abuse (CASA) Civic Taskforce spent the last year reviewing existing policies and programs, including curricula and programs for preventing first time use, and how to ensure treatment for young people who have used alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.

The CASA task force of approximately 20 principals, teachers, district staff, parents, and youth realized that the most effective strategies linked the schools with the ongoing efforts in the community,

according to Jane Callahan, the director of the Fighting Back Partnership in Vallejo.

The recommendations call for three basic approaches. First, a "universal" approach, should address the needs of all populations and groups within the schools. The second approach is "selective," which specifically targets middle school youngsters with intensive programs to delay the age at which kids try substances. The third approach focuses on strategies for "high risk" youth and the specific services they need to intervene with inappropriate behavior.

The community and the schools are now faced with the challenge of implementing the recommendations in a way that allows them to work together as true collaborators.

Mayor Appoints New Council to Head Up Little Rock Fighting Back



Little Rock — Mayor James Dailey recognizes the importance of commitment and support from local government for achieving the objectives of the Fighting Back project. The mayor has demonstrated his support by appointing a governance board whose members represent major public and private institutions, and the community at large.

The governance board includes the police chief, the vice president of programs and services for the United Way, the director of the Arkansas State Alcohol & Drug Agency, the superintendent of schools, an assistant U.S. attorney, the director of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, the president and CEO of the Arkansas Children's Hospital, and director of the

University of Arkansas at Little Rock, as well as many others.

Rick Colclasure, director of the Fighting Back project, points out that an active commitment from all of these board members to bring resources and support to bear on efforts to reduce substance abuse will be key to the success of the Fighting Back Project.

"The board has strong promise for shaping policy and effecting systemwide change that supports the reduction of substance abuse and related mayhem in Little Rock," Colclasure says, adding that such broad community representation will also help to increase active participation from key community institutions and groups on the Fighting Back committees.

Did You Know...

Elize M. Brown, former director for Oakland's Project EMERGE Fighting Back, is now a program officer with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey. Andy Nelson, another former staff member of Project EMERGE, now works as a research analyst with the Fighting Back Evaluation Team at Brandies University. Nelson is also working toward his Ph.D. in social welfare policy.

Providence Hospital Opens Treatment Facility in Washington, DC



Washington, DC — In recent years the criminal justice system was the only option for substance abuse treatment for medically indigent residents of Washington's Ward 7. The Fighting Back Project of the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization has collaborated with many institutions to provide alternatives. One of these options is an Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program operated through a contract with Providence Hospital. The program operates from the Marshall Heights offices on Minnesota Avenue. It builds upon Marshall Heights' commitment to address substance abuse within the framework of comprehensive medical care.

The program has agreements for referrals from the District Court, the DC Housing Authority, the child welfare agency, and a myriad of community based organizations and churches throughout the area. The program also provides treatment for patients with traditional insurance coverage for substance abuse.

The DC Charter Health Plan (the District's Medicaid managed care administrator), the Greater Health Care Systems and the Public Benefit Corporation, which includes all major safety net providers (including DC General Hospital, and all public clinics in the city), have all agreed to refer clients with substance abuse problems.

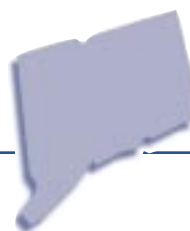
As a result of the collaboration involved in developing the Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program, Loretta Tate, director of Fighting Back, believes that they have gained some headway in educating the public about the importance of treating substance abuse as a health care issue.

The Fighting Back project is working with its partners to conduct a training for all emergency room personnel in the participating hospitals and clinics on identifying the signs and symptoms of substance abuse. The training will help to ensure that health care professionals will take every opportunity to refer persons with substance abuse problems to treatment.

Did You Know...

Milwaukee's Fighting Back, Inc. has continued as a substance abuse prevention resource organization in Milwaukee. It recently received one of the Drug-Free Communities grants, administered by OJJDP. Milwaukee Fighting Back board chair Tom Brophy has come out of retirement to accept a new job as director of community relations at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

New Haven Fighting Back Welcomes New Director



The City of New Haven recently welcomed Marzella Tyson as the director of the Fighting Back project. In this role, she will direct the project's strategy to reduce substance abuse in New Haven.

Tyson brings to this position 12 years of experience in the public health field, much of it spent working for the City of New Haven. She has worked in the area of maternal and child health, in the Connecticut Department of Health and Addiction Services, and with local advocacy groups around a number of health policy issues.

Tyson will draw upon successful experiences in increasing pediatric immunization rates, disease prevention in bilingual communities, and expanding health services for Medicaid and uninsured populations to support the objectives of the New Haven Fighting Back strategy. The strategy focuses on reducing substance abuse through expanding social detox, and addressing substance abuse treatment and support services for citizens in and around public housing.

Did You Know...

Northwest New Mexico Fighting Back is working with seven communities in the region to provide public information and community mobilization services to Native American communities. One of the regional sites, Tohatchi, has formed several coalitions to address youth initiatives, and gain access to additional resources. The effort has spawned the formation of three nonprofit organizations. The other community sites are making progress toward the formation of a cohesive coalition that eventually will evolve into an incorporated organization.

Did You Know...

The Charlotte-Mecklenberg Fighting Back project has operated with increased financial support from the Mecklenberg County Commission, and the County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. Project director Hattie Anthony was recognized as one of 56 persons in the US to receive the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award. The strategy continues to strengthen school and community approaches to reducing substance abuse among youth, quality substance abuse treatment, and demolishing crack houses.

Santa Barbara Residents Support Server Training Programs

Santa Barbara — In May, the Santa Barbara City Council voted to adopt several key recommendations made by the Old Town Task Force, a collaborative effort to reduce alcohol related mayhem in the South State Street area of Santa Barbara.

The council agreed to a six-month voluntary action for all Old Town alcohol outlets to participate in Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training programs. If after six months there is not 100 percent voluntary participation for RBS training on the part of all establishments that sell alcohol, an ordinance for mandatory RBS training will go into effect.

Trainings will be organized by Luz Maria Ortiz, director of the Designated Driver and Responsible Beverage Server Program. Ortiz says she is pleased with the popularity of the program thus far. Three months into the trial period, 15 Old Town area bars — and 100 people — have already participated in the server training.

The trainings focus on three areas: the physiological effects of alcohol, liability, and fake identification. The police department, a partner in the program, has facilitated the training to recognize false identification cards.

Ortiz finds it encouraging that restaurants have begun to request the training on their own and do not need to be convinced to attend. This is a big accomplishment, since only a year ago many of the same restaurants were hesitant to even discuss responsible beverage service training with members of the task force. Today, establishment owners attend trainings alongside their employees.

The Old Town Task Force represents a variety of institutions including fire and police commissioners, city council, the chamber of commerce, alcohol vending merchants, and community residents. The primary charge of this group is to reduce excessive alcohol consumption and associated mayhem, one of three objectives of the Santa Barbara Fighting Back strategy to reduce substance abuse.



The Fighting Back Newsletter is a periodic publication that reports on the Fighting Back community strategies to reduce substance abuse.

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For more information about community strategies to fight substance abuse, visit Join Together Online at

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